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MEDITATIONS

ON THE

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST

TAKEN FROM

A Novena in Preparation for the Feast of the Same

By

FATHER C. BORGO, S.J.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

"Sicut dilexit me Pater et ego dilexi vos. Maneto in dilectione mea."—Jo. xv. 9.

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FIRST MEDITATION.

THE ENDS OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

(*For the Day preceding the Novena.*)

Preparatory prayer.—Faith in God's presence.

Offering of the meditation.—Petition for attention, light, and affection.

First Prelude.—Imagine you behold Jesus Christ in the act of instituting the divine Sacrament. View Him at table with His apostles, with that bread in His hand which He blessed and substantially changes into His divine body.—Observe how he raises to heaven those divine eyes brightened with a light of more than ordinary sweetness:—see how that divine countenance is more than usually inflamed. He appears truly in an ecstasy of love.

Second Prelude.—Beg Him to give you an extraordinary light, that you may understand well the ends of His love in this Sacrament, and grace to be penetrated

deeply with them, that you may also concur to the accomplishment of these ends.

POINT I.

1. Jesus Christ instituted the divine Sacrament that He might fully satisfy His desire of communicating to us all His riches. So many other ways of communicating His divine gifts to men had not yet contented Him. Ponder well, Religious soul, this insatiable desire of His most liberal Heart.

i. This is not simply a new gift that He offers to the souls He loves; it is a compendium of all His gifts; every kind of grace is included in it. Whatever wants a soul may have in this life, it can here find a means of supplying and satisfying them all. Tempted, afflicted, timid, weak, blind, poor, sick, dying souls, here, if you know how to make use of them, you may find all the helps which are found separated in so many other means; in friends, advisers, masters, books, examples, considerations, in all the devotions of Christianity. In each of these kinds of advantages bestowed by the Heart of Jesus numberless souls have found means of sanctifying themselves. In other means we may often want the oppor-

tunity, or that facility and frequency we require. But in this Sacrament Jesus Christ is always present and ready, everywhere and for every one. What a reproach this of your long tepidity in the service of God! What a reprehension of your indolence and neglect of so universal a remedy!

ii. But this is not simply a compendium of the other divine gifts; it is also a gift entirely new, and the greatest of all the gifts to which the infinite charity of your Redeemer has given birth. Here He gives you the plant itself, the parent of so many fruits, He gives you Himself. In Himself He gives you everything, without reserving anything to Himself. He gives you His sacred humanity, with all the merits of His mortal life; He gives you His divinity, with all the infinite treasures of His wisdom, power and goodness. He puts no other limit to His desire of enriching you than the limit which you put yourself, your disposition, and your capacity.

2. Ponder well this excess of love, O soul that art so sensible to all human courtesy. The gifts of men appease you when irritated, rouse you when indifferent, engage and conquer you. Only towards your God your ungrateful heart changes its nature. Be confounded, repent, melt into sorrow, and

resolve once for all what you ought to think, to feel and to do in order to give contentment to the divine Heart, insatiable in its desires of imparting good.

POINT II.

1. Jesus Christ instituted the divine Sacrament to unite Himself to our souls. This is the object of His most liberal love. Behold Him here, that merchant in the Gospel, who sells all his property to purchase a pearl he believes to be rare and precious. O Jesus, Son of God, can then we and the possession of our hearts be so valuable in your eyes? Vile and ungrateful soul, think of this mystery! So ardently does the Only-begotten Son of the Father long to become one thing with you by the most intimate union that can exist between the eternal God and a mortal creature. And by an effort of power and of wisdom He has found a means of making Himself as it were one with you, by becoming your food, so as to be wholly and in truth the property of the creature, provided the creature consents to be wholly His by a reciprocal and loving return. Reason would shudder to think of it, if faith did not oblige us to believe it. Yes, my Jesus and my God, I believe it.

2. But do I properly conceive as I ought

how it is that I am so insensible to such love? O how late have I known Thee and myself! As I admire Thee, so am I horrified at myself. How often hast Thou thus lovingly united Thyself to my soul! But to what a monster hast thou found Thyself united, O divine lover! To what a monster of unworthiness, uncleanness, coldness, and ingratitude! This my soul has so often found itself in the bosom of a happiness it has not known; to enjoy which, even for once only, all my blood would have been well shed! O blind, foolish, unhappy and guilty soul of mine, what moments have you lost! what delights you have not had the taste to relish! The Seraphim themselves envied you; and I. . . Ah! my vile senses, ah! deceitful world, ah! treacherous passions, what have you given me in exchange?

3. Here pause a little, Religious soul, and compare this infinite and loving possession of God with those occasions of your tepidity that deprive you of the knowledge and relish of so great a good. Make generous resolutions, beg great light and great graces, and conclude with an entire renunciation of your self-love, and with an absolute offering of your heart to the desires, designs, and burning affection of the most amiable and loving heart of your divine Spouse.

SECOND MEDITATION.

THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT LIVES A LIFE OF BEATITUDE.

(*For the First Day of the Novena.*)

This is a truth imperceptible to your self-love, which, in the most holy Sacrament, sees the Heart of Jesus Christ in a total privation of all the sensible blessings of earth.

Preparatory prayer.—Faith in God's presence.

Offering of the meditation.—Petition for attention, light, and affection.

First Prelude.—Imagine you see Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament, opening His divine breast, and showing you His Heart as on a throne of sweetest light and of living fire.

Second Prelude.—Beg of Him to give you a share of that sweet light and of that divine fire, to undeceive and inflame your heart.

POINT I.

Seek in the Heart of Jesus Christ the idea you ought to form of the greatness, beauty, and felicity of temporal blessings.

1. That divine Heart enjoys in that narrow ciborium an infinite happiness, without however tasting any of that which the world esteems, and which your self-love believes so necessary to your contentment. Silence and solitude surround Him, instead of earthly pleasures. His lodging is often in poverty and filth, instead of gems and gold. For the few moments that He is not left alone, He generally has before Him rude people and persons of low esteem. How often does He find Himself in the midst of those who offend Him, and of His enemies! How often does it happen that He is insulted, derided, profaned! What a wretched situation is His in the eyes of your self-love! If you had to remain in that tabernacle as He remains, were it only for a week, you would die of melancholy. That divine Heart, however, in such solitude, in such company, in the midst of such contempt, loses nothing of its happiness, which is always infinite.

2. And how often do you lose your tranquillity! And for what a trifle do you lose it! O blind and feeble heart! By your attachment to sensible things you have made your happiness depend upon them, because in these things it is that you have hitherto sought happiness. Ah! your heart is of the same nature as that of Jesus Christ. Like

His divine Heart, your heart was never made for these pleasures that thus allure the senses. Be confounded at your past folly. O Heart infinitely blest, make me know the deceitfulness of the pleasures which my self-love suggests and requires. Give me an utter contempt for all that the world esteems and loves.—Examine what desire of self-love allures you most, and against this particularly direct your resolutions and prayers.

POINT II.

1. Study in the Heart of Jesus Christ the idea you ought to form of the greatness, beauty and happiness, of spiritual blessings.

i. The love and possession of God constitute the happiness of the divine Heart of Jesus Christ. As that Heart is personally united to the Divinity, its happiness is infinite, because its love and union with the Divinity are infinite. Behold the reason why its happiness is not at all disturbed by the absence of these temporal blessings, which to you appear so great. As far as regards its happiness, that poor ciborium is equal to the throne of glory which it enjoys in heaven. After having fixed your eyes on the sun for a short time, you no longer see anything else; in everything you continue to see the

sun, because the intense impression of that great light makes your eyes insensible to the weaker light of other objects.

ii. O happy insensibility to all the goods of this life! How necessary is this insensibility for you to make your heart happy, even in this life! Say once more to yourself, "My heart is of the same nature as is the Heart of Jesus Christ: that only which makes Him happy can make me happy also." Call to mind those days, or at least those hours of your life, when your heart was most inflamed with love of your God. O sweet and yet bitter recollection! What was then wanting to your happiness? Compare the tranquillity of your heart then with that which it enjoys at present. Compassionate yourself, envy yourself, be indignant with yourself.

2. O infinitely content and happy Heart of my Lord, when wilt Thou have pity on me? Foolish soul, and why do you not take pity on yourself? Thus does that Heart answer you from that tabernacle. What reply will you make? Ask pardon for having allowed that holy love for His Heart, the sweetness and peace of which He has formerly made you taste, to be extinguished by your dissipation. Make great, but practical and particular, resolutions to disengage yourselves

from that which is the special impediment to the increase of divine love in you, and consequently the impediment also to the acquisition and increase of the happiness of your heart even in this life.

THIRD MEDITATION.

THE LIFE OF GRACE OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

(*For the Second Day of the Novena.*)

He who lives in a foreign country to trade or to learn some science, is said to be leading there a life of traffic or of study. Jesus Christ wished to remain on this earth, although it no longer suited His state of glory, in order that He might promote the interests of divine grace. Thus the life that He leads here amidst us in the Sacrament, may be called a life of grace.—We will meditate on the sentiment of His divine Heart on this subject, and the sentiments He requires from our hearts on it.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Imagine you behold Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament, who with His breast open, shows you His divine Heart, from which bursts a torrent of most clear water, signifying the graces He desires to shower upon all who present themselves.

Second Prelude.—Present yourself before Him as a poor unclean leper, and languish-

ing with thirst, and beg of Him to cure, cleanse and restore you by His grace.

POINT I.

Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament lives a life of grace. What are the sentiments with which this life inspires His Heart?

i. What were His sentiments during His mortal life, when He healed the sick, and for this purpose sought them out Himself; when He gave sight to the blind, raised the dead to life, and conferred His numerous miraculous favors? All these sentiments of pity, tenderness, mercy, and liberality, He now feels at the same moment in this state, which is a compendium of all His wonders. With what sentiments did He encounter so much fatigue, want, and torment! All this charity and infinite love He now feels is this state in which He continues to renew every day the work of our redemption.

ii. A great flame confined in a narrow furnace, how does it gain strength and rage! You may imagine the same of this divine Heart. Think, to speak after our way of understanding things, that this infinitely loving Heart is in a kind of inexpressible suffering, through the excessive fulness of the graces it contains, and to which it can-

not give vent through want of persons to receive them. One day Jesus said to a beloved soul as He showed her His Heart, as in an abyss of fire,—"My Heart, my daughter, can no longer support its desire to communicate itself to souls. Do thou assist me, my daughter, to lessen this fire. Publish and cause it to be published over all the world, that I will set no limits to my graces, for those souls that come to seek them in this my Heart."

2. Now you are one of these cold souls, so reserved with the Heart of this loving God. Have you ever well pondered and understood these sentiments of His Heart? What do you think of Him, now that you know them? what do you think of yourself? O heart of infinite liberality and charity, why have I not known Thee before? Why have I hitherto been so destitute of grace, so diffident with Thee, so timid in praying to Thee, so reserved in my requests?—Admiration, thanksgiving, confidence, resolutions.

POINT II.

1. What sentiments does the Heart of Jesus Christ require from you by this life of Grace in which He remains for you in this Sacrament?

i. First, you ought practically to make this divine Heart your only place of refuge in all the wants of your heart. You have not done so hitherto, since this loving Heart has been the last to which you have had recourse. Had you practically believed that in this divine Heart there was a true remedy for all your temptations, fits of melancholy, doubts and weaknesses, you would not have sought it from creatures, from your senses, and even from your passions. Examine yourself with sincerity on the wrongs you have done in this to the most tender and powerful of all hearts, and begin immediately to repair them.

ii. Secondly, you ought to have recourse to this divine Heart with a sincere and strong desire of the graces of which you stand in need. Ah! that divine Heart is perfectly acquainted with your most secret sentiments, and sees how weak is your desire to love Him, even in the very act of begging the grace of His love; that you fear to have the grace effectually to break that attachment to creatures; that while you beg the grace with your lips, you have a secret horror of self-hatred, of love of contempt, of an entire renunciation of the indulgence of your senses. Your best means of deserving the graces of Jesus Christ is by the sincerity and

greatness of your desires. Compare your desires with those which you have meditated in the Heart of Jesus Christ. Blush, seek pardon, and begin by asking as a first grace such a desire of being cured by His graces, as may be worthy of the desire He has to communicate them to you.

iii. Thirdly, you ought to have recourse to the Heart of Jesus Christ with an humble, but loving confidence; that is, with a kind of affectionate familiarity which, in this Sacrament, God allows and wishes you to have with Him. O soul! unmindful of your happy lot! I might almost call this forgetfulness a greater wonder than the love of this Heart for man; for this is the God of majesty and glory, before whom the Seraphim tremble in heaven, who here on earth wishes to converse confidently with us. You give the closest confidence of your heart to creatures sometimes more vile than yourself, and who perhaps dishonor and betray you; and are reserved and close of heart with God, who condescends to abase Himself so much for you. Ah! it is not humility that influences you; it is the little love you entertain for Him, and the superficial nature of the persuasion which you have of His excessive love for you. O divine Heart, infinitely amiable and loving, it shall be so no more!

2. Open your whole heart to the heart of Jesus, relate to it your pains, your wounds, your wants. He knows not how to resist a heart that is wretched, be it but anxious and confiding.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

JESUS CHRIST IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT LEADS A LIFE OF SACRIFICE.

(*For the Third Day of the Novena.*)

The sacrifice of the cross lasted a few hours. Jesus Christ renews it every moment in the Eucharist, since the holy Mass is celebrated every moment in some part or other of the world. Thus the life of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament may be called a continual life of sacrifice; in which He Himself is both priest and victim. We will then meditate,—first, what share the heart of Jesus has in this Sacrifice of itself: and—secondly, what a strong invitation this is to our heart to sacrifice itself for Jesus.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—View Jesus Christ in the Sacrament as a lamb placed on the altar to be sacrificed, and flames issuing from His Heart, with which, like a victim, it is consumed.

Second Prelude.—Beg of Him to make you understand well the value of His Sacrifice, and to give you courage to imitate Him by the sacrifice of your whole self to His love.

POINT I.

1. The love of Jesus Christ for His divine Father, and for us was the principal cause of the Sacrifice of the cross; but the envy and hatred of His enemies and executioners had also a share in it. But here it is love alone that does everything. This new sacrifice is, then, entirely the invention and work of His loving Heart alone. The essential interest of the divine glory and of man's redemption, was already infinitely satisfied by the sacrifice of the cross.

i. Why then is it thus continually and for so long a time renewed? Ah! what sufficed to satisfy the infinite justice of the Father was not, however, sufficient to satisfy the infinite love of the loving Heart of the Son. In order to be sacrificed on the cross, it was sufficient that He left His enemies in ignorance of His majesty, for had they known Him to be the God of glory, they would never have crucified Him; but in order to sacrifice Himself again in the Blessed Sacrament, it is necessary for Him to conceal His humanity itself from His dearest friends.

ii. And then why not content Himself with this renewal of His Sacrifice once in the year, as He is satisfied that the memory

of His other mysteries should be renewed in the Church once a year? Or why not at least provide in this His new sacrifice for His own divine Honor? Why accomplish it with a concealment that exposes Him to many irreverences and sacrileges? And then, why—Ah! how infinite are the difficulties that His greatness and our unworthiness opposed to this Sacrifice; nothing could overcome them but the excessive love of a heart insatiable in loving us.

2. Do you understand now, my cold, blind, ungrateful soul, the share the Heart of Jesus Christ has in His continual sacrifice of Himself for us in the Blessed Sacrament?—Admiration, thanksgiving, and desire of correspondence.

POINT II.

1. The life of sacrifice that the Heart of Jesus Christ lives for you in the Blessed Sacrament, is an invitation that urges you to enter upon a similar life of sacrifice for Him. If you desire to answer the call, you have nothing to do but to imitate Him. It is His love for you that every day sacrifices Him; love Him, and you too will easily sacrifice yourselves for Jesus. Ah! consider attentively that these repugnances to

trifling sacrifices are a sign of your little love for Him. What other reason is there why retirement, poverty and obedience, are disagreeable to you? What other reason is there why it costs you so much to subdue a resentment, an affection, a dislike? During so many years of religious life, you have never, alas! tasted a drop of that ineffable joy which souls that love Jesus Christ experience in suffering. Unhappy soul! do this at least: begin to sacrifice yourself, in order to learn how to love Him.

2. Every little sacrifice produces a new degree of love in us, which moves us and strengthens us for a more noble sacrifice. Provided only the soul perseveres with some constancy in her little efforts, the loving heart of Jesus Christ loses patience in thus inflaming her heart by slow degrees. A day suddenly comes when He purposely puts her in the occasion of making an heroic sacrifice to Him, and provided only she has resolution to attempt it, He enkindles in her heart one of those flames of His love, which animates her to some great action that becomes the beginning of her sanctity. This is the ordinary way of the sanctification of souls. Consider it well, as it is less difficult than it appears.

3. Compare the sacrifice of Jesus Christ

with those you have an opportunity of making at present. If yours are at present small, what a shame to refuse to make them! If they are great, ah! happy soul! this is the day, on which Jesus Christ wishes to begin your sanctification, and consequently this is a happy day for you. Fix your eyes on that tabernacle where dwells your only good, your Spouse, your God sacrificed for you; and speak to that adorable Heart with that confidence and familiarity you have learned from yesterday's meditation, and resolve.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

IN HONOR OF THE SACRED HEART FOR ITS LIFE OF HUMILIATION IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

(*For the Fourth Day of the Novena.*)

"Learn of me, who am meek and humble of heart," are the words of Jesus Christ, and He repeats them by His actions in the life of humiliation which He has embraced in the Blessed Sacrament. In this Blessed Sacrament we will meditate His entire humility, and its most remarkable circumstances.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Observe with a little attention the total absence of majesty Jesus Christ shows in that tabernacle, and conceiving as well as you can the majesty which surrounds Him in heaven, conclude what an infinite difference there must be.

Second Prelude.—Beg of Him to let you fully comprehend the secret intentions of His Heart in a state so unworthy of His greatness, and the grace of an effectual love of Him by imitation.

POINT I.

1. Self-abasement and the love of every-

thing that can contribute to it, form the character of humility. Observe the abasement of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. He totally conceals everything that gives honor. What mark do you see of His divinity? Splendor, majesty, the attending bands of angels and throne of glory—where are they? What appearance betrays itself of that power which supports the whole world? of that wisdom that governs it? of that sovereignty which reigns in heaven and on earth? Could He hide Himself more, if He feared to be honored in this Sacrament as the God that He is? Could He even debase Himself more, if He really desired to be disregarded and despised? His abode is nothing but a narrow lodging of wood, or at most of stone, and although a few altars are kept becomingly, numberless others, on which He remains, are so destitute, wretched and dirty, that the dwelling of an artizan is neater. He could have made it a precept in Christianity that the gold and finest jewels of the cities should be devoted to His tabernacles as formerly in the ancient Temple built by Solomon. But though He knew what would happen to Him, He has abandoned Himself in this respect to the indolence, the avarice, and the irreligion of ungrateful men. What a complete example of the sincerest humility

of heart! It is not necessity, it is His Heart that generously chooses such humiliations and such a contemptible appearance and state. Here then is a Heart that loves humility with a sincerity beyond suspicion.

2. And this is the humility He wishes you to imitate. Examine your words and the acts of humility which you also sometimes perform; are they thus voluntary and loving? Are you as indifferent as the Heart of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament whether you are treated with honor or contempt? Do you resign your honor as He does, into the hands of others? Ah! what a model! what a school! what a difference between the two Spouses you and your Lord, and yet the one but a slave, the other a king! Resolve and pray.

POINT II.

1. Consider two striking circumstances of the humility of the Heart of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

i. First a heart less fond of humility than that of Jesus Christ might have believed that, for the greater glory of God, He should have set bonds to His debasement in this adorable Sacrament. This God present in the Blessed Sacrament would have been more

easily known and respected there, if He had at least from time to time, let some sensible sign of His hidden majesty betray itself. But not so thought the Heart of Jesus Christ. He wished that the example of His humility in the Blessed Sacrament should be perfect to the last degree. Reflect religious souls, that it is sometimes your secret vanity that thus deceives you. If I remain silent, if I yield, honor, innocence and justice are lost. Ah! do you not know that the highest honor of innocence is, to be innocently undervalued, and that the greatest glory of justice, is to be unjustly oppressed? This is the beloved maxim of the humble Heart of Jesus Christ, and to many souls, even in Religious houses, and even in objects in themselves small, this maxim frequently gives opportunities of great and heroic acts.

ii. Secondly, a heart less fond of humility than the Heart of Jesus Christ, might have believed that to let itself be sensibly known by men, a little at least, was likely to produce more fruit in souls. O loving incarnate love! what heart amongst us could have resisted even a fleeting glimpse only seen by us once in life in a sensible manner, of the sweet and heavenly beauty, were it only of Thy adorable humanity. But not so thought the Heart of Jesus Christ. He the

infinite wisdom, thought it most for our good to give us in the Blessed Sacrament the greatest example of His humility.

2. Ah! then, pride, vain esteem of yourself, your natural haughtiness has been considered, O Religious soul, by Jesus Christ as His and your greatest enemy. Jesus Christ, to undeceive us by His own example in a thing of so much consequence, has even renounced the more easy acquisition of our tender love. But, O Heart wonderfully humble! O my sovereign, infinitely adorable, and infinitely humbled! more dear art Thou to me precisely as Thou art more humbled for my instruction. "Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior."—Examine your particular circumstances, make particular resolutions, and beg with a great heart for great helps.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

(*For the Fifth Day of the Novena.*)

Since this life of love of Jesus Christ ought to be in a particular manner the especial subject of meditation for the day of the feast of the sacred Heart, we will take for to-day one small specimen of it from the single circumstance of Jesus Christ having wished to remain always with us in the Blessed Sacrament.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Fixing a loving and attentive eye on the holy tabernacle, try to make the most lively act of faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ, and imagine you hear Him address to you the sweet promise He formerly made to His apostles.—"Ecce ego vobiscum sum usque ad consummationem sæculi."—"Behold I am, and established myself among you to the end of the world."

Second Prelude.—Beg of him to make you feel all the tenderness of His loving Heart in this His continual presence in the Sacrament, and all the gratitude you owe Him for this His loving invention.

POINT I.

1. Jesus Christ could work our sanctification by communicating Himself to us figuratively, not really. But great love is not satisfied with giving assistance only at a distance, it loves personal presence. But why could not Jesus Christ content Himself with being really present in the Blessed Sacrament only during the holy Sacrifice of the Mass? By this alone He would have made many personal visits every day to His beloved souls. No! this did not seem enough to His Heart; He would always remain under the Sacramental species, that is, He would become absolutely and perpetually our fellow citizen and familiar companion. Then He might have contented Himself with remaining in one city of every province, or at the most in only one temple of each city. No! He would be in every street. In the wide expanse of heaven, His humanity is only found in one place, on earth the same humanity assumes a kind of immensity, and wherever is to be found some small number of Christians, there it also is found. Oh! how very true is the saying of some saints, that the Heart of Jesus Christ is enamored of men.

2. But reflect, moreover, that this His remaining always and ever among men costs

Him one of the greatest miracles of Omnipotence, for such is the renewal of His sacred humanity in so many places;—and still more, that it costs Him an infinite number of insults, because it has been the very occasion of His receiving them. Ah! how little, perhaps, your desire of being with Him corresponds with the desire of His loving Heart to be with you. Examine yourself. Does He require anything difficult or inconvenient from His friends to visit Him? What expense, considerations, and trouble, to pay court to the kings of the earth! How many ceremonies, purifications, and observances were formerly necessary for approaching the tabernacle of the ancient Ark! But neither poverty, nor deformity, nor means of state, of person or of dress, hinders our approaching this loving God. It is sufficient to love Him, to have a right to be received by Him with boundless affability, and to treat Him as an equal, a friend, a confidant. O incomprehensible love! What condescension! What tenderness! But, oh! what secret remorse for you, O Religious soul, who have been so easily deterred from visiting Him by every slight reason.

POINT II.

1. Consider other circumstances of His

love in remaining with us. He delights in it so much, that if we cannot go to Him, He causes Himself to be carried to us, and in this the proofs of His tender love are excessive. And whither does He often let Himself be carried? Where you would dread and shudder to enter. Into the vilest and poorest cottages, into the most loathsome abodes, and most horrid prisons. Neglect not to reflect, also, by what hands He sometimes lets Himself be carried. O dreadful unworthiness, even among His ministers! But the tender heart of this loving God seems not to perceive it. In the ancient times of Christianity, the Christians were allowed to take the Blessed Sacrament from the sacred table, and carry it with them, and they brought it to their homes, and bore it with them where they pleased in their journeys. And if the Church, indignant at the irreverences that languid faith and cold charity began in process of time to commit, had not forbidden it, Jesus Christ would allow Himself to be thus treated even at present. What say you, Religious soul, to these reflections? Have you ever yet well comprehended all the love this divine heart displays in continually remaining with us?

2. But observe a more astonishing condescension. However strongly He desires al-

ways to be with you, He does not, however hinder your human duties and interests. Yes, go to your labors, duties and business. Jesus Christ is content to remain alone, waiting your moments of liberty which may restore you to Him. He does not even wish to disturb your suitable recreations. Yes, willingly He lets you go at your ease to meals, to recreation, and to lawful diversions. He is quite a wonderful lover! He seems to be careful in contenting Himself, not to burden or distress you in anything. Besides so many hours of the day, He remains solitary in His ciborium the live-long night; and while you sleep, His heart watches for you to guard you:—watches and prays to His divine Father for you;—watches and defends your person from so many dangers;—watches, and faithfully guards your houses. Oh! if you are not touched with a love so tender, so discreet, so dissembling, so constant, so condescending, so beneficent, confess either that you have no faith, or that you have a heart unworthy to live. Reprove yourself, then, severely, bewail your forgetfulness, and determine what you ought to do in future, that you may correspond to such loving-kindness in Jesus Christ, as has made Him sacrifice Himself to remain always with you.

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

IN HONOR OF THE ACTIVE LIFE OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

(*For the Sixth Day of the Novena.*)

If you really love Jesus Christ, it is impossible that your heart should not feel concerned in the interests of His. Now that loving Heart is never idle in the Blessed Sacrament, it exerts itself there with an activity equal to its love. Consider therefore, to-day:—i. First, the employments of the active life of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and why you ought therefore to act with Him.—ii. Secondly, His way of acting, and in this the mode you may imitate in your actions.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Imagine you behold Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament in the figure of the Good Shepherd, carrying on His breast a mangled and dying sheep, and healing and reviving it by pressing it close to His open Heart.

Second Prelude.—Beg of Him to inspire you with an ardent zeal to concur as far as you can in making Him known and loved.

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

POINT I.

1. The glory of His divine Father and the good of souls are the motives that detain Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. These are the interests of that loving Heart, which consequently remains there in continual movement to promote those interests. From those silent tabernacles Jesus Christ rules and directs His Church. At that divine table, as a shepherd, He nourishes and gives life to His sheep, that is, to good souls, and makes Himself at that same table their master, their physician, and their protector. There, like an attentive and loving guide and tutor, He instructs and comforts weak and tender souls. There, He reproves with more force as He does it with more pity, and calls to His love, not only the sick, but souls that are dying, and even dead, whilst both by paternal threats and the sweetest promises, He revives, cures, and renovates them. In a word, all the good we receive comes to us from this source. His Heart is the immense ocean of light, affection, health, and spiritual riches, which pours itself through the whole mystical body of the Church.

2. Now, religious soul, if you wish to belong to this adorable and amiable Heart, you should clothe yourself with its spirit,

concern yourself in its concerns, interest yourself in its interests. You are the slave of Jesus Christ, purchased by Him, and at how great a price! You are under obligation to bear as far as you can the burden which He carries.—You are his daughter: you ought to take to heart as much as possible the affairs of your great Father. You are His spouse: what a disgrace if, content with enjoying the quiet repose of His love, you do not use all your efforts to concur to His glory! Nothing then can exempt you from procuring, as far as you can, the glory of God and the good of souls. You will afterwards see how you can really do this; meanwhile, be convinced that it is your duty. Review now the thoughts, the words, and the actions of your life; and observe, if you direct some of them at least to the great end, that your patron, your Father, and your spouse, may be glorified in the world. Ah! consider it is impossible truly to love Jesus Christ without doing something for Him. Make then your resolution. Happy that religious community, in which such a resolution is made at the same time by all.

POINT II.

1. The active life of the divine Heart in

the Sacrament is a model of the active life that you too should lead. The great works which Jesus performs here for the divine glory He performs without the noise of that external ministry which He exercised in His mortal life, as a model for apostolic men. Here He does all by peaceful interior graces, insinuating thoughts and counsels, inspiring with most patient sweetness salutary emotions into our hearts, and giving in secret the most opportune and copious aids to all who approach Him.

Behold, O spouse of Jesus Christ, the share in the apostolate which may be yours. Without assuming the tone of a preacher, a pious conversation, a prudent counsel, a friendly entreaty,—sometimes an affectionate word, a mild and compassionate look with your equals, may gain much for your God. Ah! many know how to weave secret nets, and even from a distance, that they may insinuate themselves into the confidence of others, and sometimes for an evil end. Why should not the love of Jesus Christ be equally ingenious in enabling us to re-unite two souls that have been asunder, to prevent some one neglect of rule, to deliver from danger some simple and unguarded soul?

2. The second means of which Jesus Christ makes use, in His active life in the

Blessed Sacrament is example. The secret life of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the compendium of all the divine examples which He gave in His mortal life; and many are the souls which are thus conducted, and in a most singular manner, to the most sublime perfection. But your good example has in some measure an advantage over that of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; because His example does not engage all, because all do not consider it; whereas all your sisters must see yours even against their will. Be assured that the greatest difficulty to introduce an improvement in a monastery, is to find one who will be the first to put it in practice. Aspire to so noble a glory, when an occasion presents itself, and to so high a merit with the Heart of your God.

3. Finally, the third means of which Jesus Christ makes use in His active life in the Blessed Sacrament, is prayer. In this Sacrament He is always present as an advocate and victim, that He may offer for us to His Father both His mediation and Himself. This most sweet and efficacious device for glorifying God can never be wanting to us. You should always join this to all your other means, and when they are attended with any hindrance or difficulty, this will supply the deficiency. Ah! if you knew what immense

troops of souls there are in heaven gained by the prayers of holy virgins! And do you unite your heart likewise to the Heart of Jesus, making yourself a secret victim with Him for the salvation of souls. Let all the good you do and all the evil you suffer, amongst your other ends, be directed to this also. Make, then, now for ever an offering of yourself to the active heart of Jesus Christ, and you may promise yourself that you will certainly obtain by this means the greatest favors of His love.

EIGHTH MEDITATION.

IN HONOR OF THE HIDDEN LIFE OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

(*For the Seventh Day of the Novena.*)

The hidden life of Jesus Christ is one of the most sublime examples given us by our God in the Blessed Sacrament. Enter upon this meditation with a docile heart, desirous of the impressions of grace. You will meditate.

i. First, what this hidden life is, to which you are invited, by the example of your Spouse, in the Blessed Sacrament.

ii. Secondly, the very great advantages, you may safely promise yourself from it.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Present yourself to Jesus Christ with all possible recollection. Separate yourself in thought from all the world. Imagine yourself alone with your divine master, as in the desert to which He retired for forty days, to receive from Him lessons, not indeed common to all Christians, but peculiarly belonging to your state.

Second Prelude.—Beg Him, then, with great fervor, to conceal nothing from you of the sublime perfection to which He has al-

ready called you, by calling you to religion, and to join to great lights the strongest graces.

POINT I.

1. Who, seeing Jesus Christ in His present state, would say that it is He who moves and governs the heavens, the stars, the angels, mankind and all creatures? Of so extensive and noble an exercise of His providence, wisdom, and power, here nothing appears. In fact, he is here for no other purpose but for the secret interests of his heart with souls. All is silence, solitude, humility, patience concealment, secret and interior life. Taking your view from this range of admirable examples here before you, consider what is that hidden life in which He so much desires you to imitate Him.

i. The foundation of this hidden life is the internal spirit, which ought to animate your every action; which never acts by chance, nor for human ends, but which in all things ever looks up to God; which does not estimate things from appearances, but only from the substance, and for which everything is vanity and without substance, which is not the will of God,—which never seeks to do much, but to do well; to which nothing appears little that pleases God, and which con-

sequently springs from the pure love of God, and seeks the pure love of God as well for its guide, as for the only reward of its actions. It will be easy for you to consider and understand how necessary this internal spirit is for your perfection. Begin here your practical resolutions; because, if you do not begin with the care of acquiring this internal spirit, you will never arrive at that hidden life in Jesus Christ, of which the saints, after the example of St. Paul, say so many great things.

ii. In this hidden life, then, the religious soul, having by help of the internal spirit entirely banished the world from her heart, loves to hide from it as much as she can all her actions as well as herself. She is not at all so deluded as to retire by a false spirit from her proper duties and observances, but if the common duties of the rules and of charity do not interfere, she has a special love for solitude, silence, and recollection. She fears to see and to be seen by the world, in order that human respects may not by any chance secretly insinuate themselves into her actions, or the circumstances of her actions. She desires and seeks no other witnesses of her virtue and her sufferings but God, and therefore she renounces all vain consolations from the world, and exerts her

utmost to conceal from it all sign of her interior joys, as well as of her secret sufferings. She has an infinite dread of singularity, the ordinary consequence of delusions. In virtue itself, although she loves and aims at greater perfection, she avoids as far as possible all unnecessary display. She would not wish that any one should think of her; she never interferes in anything that does not concern her, and if she can, she always chooses in all things whatever is most obscure and disregarded by others. Obedience alone holds the key of her spirit; and as long as this virtue does not oblige her, she knows how to live in a Religious house for whole years, without giving occasion to others to speak of her.

2. Compare the picture of this life with that of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. It is exactly the same. Compare it with your daily life, and see what is wanting. And even if you find everything wanting, take the greatest care not to lose courage. Beg of the divinely hidden Heart of your Spouse to inflame yours with a desire full of courage and of confidence.

POINT II.

I. The fruits of this hidden life are as precious as the life is excellent.

i. First, it is a sure and compendious means of arriving at a great purity of conscience, and a great disengagement from the world and from ourselves. Consider the origin of your defects; for the most part they arise from the occasions that exterior objects present to your senses, and to your past bad habits. Thus it is with your faults of impatience, curiosity, vanity, etc. The pursuit of this hidden life making you fond of retirement, of attending to yourself, and of not interfering in things that do not concern you, at least preserves you from very many occasions. Moreover, the study of this life insensibly accustoms us often to reflect upon ourselves, our intentions, and the motions of our hearts, and by this reflection are prevented those frequent defects which you only perceive, I may say, after you have fallen. Hence, by little and little, our attachment to the world and to ourselves becomes weakened, because the habit of thinking of, and so also the habit of taking pleasure in the objects of our former attachment, natural inclinations, and disordered customs gradually diminishes.

ii. Secondly, the serene peace and quiet of the superior part of the soul at least, are certain fruits of this hidden life. Think of all the things mentioned above, and you have

immediately as many causes of this interior quiet. "Whence come," said St. James the apostle, "the many storms of your poor heart? Do they not arise from your passions?" (St. James iv.) Whatever food, then, you take from your passions by the study of this hidden life, so many steps do you make toward that constant quiet of spirit which you are seeking.

iii. Thirdly, this life is most necessary for the acquisition of the spirit of prayer. This spirit of prayer cannot be attained by a soul full of self, occupied with countless frivolities, and dissipated during the rest of the day. Here, then, is a sure method of ending once for all your complaints about prayer. Prayer follows in conformity with the rest of your day. How often have you not experienced the truth of this!

iv. Fourthly, interior sweetness and the most choice favors of heaven, in the ordinary providence of God, are annexed to this hidden life. One who does not practise it, believes it to be a melancholy life: one who practises it, finds it (and will not be long before he begins to find it,) to have joys infinitely superior to those which the world can give. Recall what you have heard and read, of so many holy souls.

2. And now what say you to advantages

so great as these? Inflame your desire, and with it overcome the repugnance of your blind self-love. Make a purpose to think often of this, by reviewing every day your resolutions. Offer them to the divine Heart, beg His grace, and resolve to make every day some examen, on the purposes formed during this meditation.

NINTH MEDITATION.

IN HONOR OF THE GLORIOUS LIFE OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE SACRAMENT.

(*For the Eighth Day of the Novena.*)

The Glories of the Life of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament are many. But to-day you will honor that particular glory of the Sacred Heart, for which it dwells so wonderfully in the Blessed Sacrament. This glory of the Sacred Heart which is quite its own, manifests itself in this Sacrament:—

i. First, by reducing souls through the force of love alone, to a total annihilation of self;

ii. Secondly, by raising them through the strength of the same love to an elevation in itself, which is wholly divine.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Imagine that you see in the open breast of Jesus Christ, His divine Heart full of such a fire of love, that it seems like a burning furnace, in which the hearts of His elect souls melt and dissolve more quickly than wax, and are purified and refined like gold.

Second Prelude.—Offer with great courage your heart likewise to these divine flames, giving yourself freely to your divine Saviour, for all that He would wish to do with you.

POINT I.

1. The glory of the divine Heart manifests itself in that great power of love, with which it inspires souls in the Blessed Sacrament, and with which it triumphs in such feeble creatures, and annihilates so many and such strong enemies. Call to mind for a while the many great victories of which you have read in so many admirable young virgins, weak in nature like you, having to contend, like you with dangers, engagements, repugnances, and instability. It was, above all, in this Sacrament of love, that those most stupendous changes were wrought in them. Think how often you have shrunk at reading of those so heroic acts of patience, of charity, of obedience, of mortification, and hatred of themselves. How have you not been astonished at those examples of silent, meek, and joyful constancy in the midst of long and most undeserved persecutions, of lingering and painful maladies, of most terrible and obstinate temptations! And how

did such feeble creatures ever attain to such complete loss of all pity for themselves, of all feeling of repugnance to acts most difficult to perform, of every sense of sympathy with the most innocent and sweet calls of humanity? Ah! from this Sacrament they drew such strength, and this strength was the strength of love.

2. Behold, then, that glory of the divine Heart which is all its own, and by which it made itself loved by these souls in so high a degree. If you love Jesus Christ, you know how to glorify Him. What are the thoughts which rise within you, when you feel the greatest desire to correspond with His love? Count all as illusion that does not aid you to despise yourself, to contradict your own will, and submit blindly and lovingly to the divine will. Die wholly to your own self-love; this is the final triumph to which the divine Heart aspires in all the graces, which it offers to you in this Sacrament of love. Resolve, then, to bring to Jesus Christ in every visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and much more at every communion, some victory gained over yourself. This is the most solid way of corresponding with His grace, for this is the peculiar interest of the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament.

POINT II.

1. That glory of the sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament, which is all its own, manifests itself also in raising souls by the strength of love, to an elevation in itself, which is wholly divine. The marvellous victory that love gains in the soul, and which you have considered in the first point, works in them a change, or rather a transformation, into something quite different from what they were. They live no more except in Jesus Christ, or rather it is Jesus Christ that lives in them, as St. Paul declared of himself, and therefore, even before putting off the infirmities of this mortal life, they lived a life which is entirely superhuman and divine. Observe how it appears in them externally. What angelic modesty! What unalterable gentleness! What amiable meekness! What exactness, prudence and sanctity breathe in their every action! Could you enter into their minds, you would seem to be entering a kingdom of light—that unspeakable light which shines in paradise. The justness of their ideas, and the sublime intelligence which they have of God and His mysteries, is inexplicable. Could you enter into their hearts, how great would be your astonishment to observe the purity and

strength, the peace and sanctity of their affections. Their soul is made the throne of grace and divine love, and these reign paramount. A Gertrude, a Catharine of Sienna, a Teresa, and so many souls, which, like theirs, were enriched with the interior treasures of Jesus Christ, will make you understand how great is the glory of this our God, the lover of souls, in raising them from such a low abasement to so high a state.

2. Feed yourself for awhile on these wonderful objects of admiration as a holy recreation of spirit. But in order that you may not lose courage for yourself, recollect, that in the house of God our Father there are many mansions; which means that although you cannot for humility aspire to such high gifts, yet by the obligation of your state, you must aim at a certain measure proper even for you. Renounce readily all that is extraordinary in these gifts, but aspire to the gift of great self-denial, of a great contempt of the world, of great patience, great recollection, etc. To these gifts you have a right and if you desire them truly, this divine Heart cannot refuse them to you, and they will work in you a change, which will elevate you high above your present misery, and thus will glorify exceedingly in your exaltation, the strength of the

love of Jesus Christ. How long will you then remain so lukewarm? How long will your mind and heart continue to be fixed upon this vile, miserable, dull earth? Ah! in how many poor servants of His—souls who are dwelling in the world, Jesus Christ by His love, works out His glory; and in you, His spouse, shall He find nothing but dishonor? Rouse yourself, resolve, and prepare yourself in such a manner that the coming feast of this divine Heart, and the communion you will make on that day, may be the beginning of a new happiness to you and of glory to Jesus Christ.

TENTH MEDITATION.

THE LIFE OF CONSUMMATED SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

(*For the Ninth Day of the Novena.*)

In the most noble kind of sacrifice that is in the Holocaust, the victim was to be entirely consumed. Such was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, of which Sacrifice the Sacrament of the altar is the renewal and memorial. And therefore the life of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament may be called a life of consummated sacrifice. In order to inflame you to imitate in this Sacrifice your divine Saviour, you will meditate :—

i. First, what sort of consummation of your sacrifice He desires.

ii. Secondly, the constancy and continuance which are necessary to your sacrifice when consummated.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Look on Jesus Christ in the Sacrament, laid on the altar as a lamb for sacrifice; and with flames issuing from His Heart, by which he is consumed as a victim.

Second Prelude.—Beg him to make you

understand the value of His sacrifice, and to give you courage to imitate Him with the entire sacrifice of yourself to His love.

POINT I.

1. Consider that Jesus Christ was not content to sacrifice Himself for you in an ordinary manner, but He sacrificed Himself in all that He could sacrifice for you! What more remained for Him on the cross to give, either in His goods, His honor, or His life? Conclude the devout review of what He has given for you with this reflection. After death, His Heart alone remained untouched by that cruel treatment which had carried its rage to His very vitals, which were in many places laid open and wounded. But His Heart too, would have part in that sacrifice, or rather we may say that it was in that divine Heart that the last consummation of the sacrifice was to be fulfilled. Accordingly it also was to be laid open and pierced.

2. Now such ought to be your sacrifice to His love. Count over the sacrifices you have ever made for him. How many have you only begun? Infinite in number are those which you have offered Him with a mere inefficacious desire. You, however, are none the more His after all this; for in this matter, so far as the object is concerned at which we

must aim, he does nothing who does not all. Consider well the reason of this. He gives nothing of any worth to God, who does not give Him his heart, for this God values more than all the rest together; and he does not give his heart truly who does not give it all without reserve. So then, the consummation which Jesus Christ desires in your sacrifice, consists in a sincere and total abandonment of yourself to Him, with a determined resolution to leave yourself to be guided at His pleasure. In this state of complete sacrifice, you ought not to consider yourself any more as your own in anything; but to think that God does as He wills with His own, when He gives you either what is bitter or what is sweet.

3. Here renew again the consideration of the infinite generosity with which Jesus Christ has given Himself for you, and given Himself entirely. Ah! what need had He to be wholly yours in order to be happy? whereas it is impossible for you to be happy, even here, without being wholly His. Make a serious examen of conscience, but let it be a brief one nevertheless, for your conscience will quickly tell you the truth as to what has been that one thing which has been principally wanting in the sacrifices our Lord has required of you. Ah! most ordinarily it is

some one thing only which makes our sacrifice imperfect, and this our self-love always reserves. To this one point apply the lights, the affections which our Lord gives you. O divine Heart, divinely prodigal of Thyself, help me to accomplish by Thy grace that to which Thy example invites me.

POINT II.

1. Jesus Christ has never retracted in the least part the entire gift He has made of Himself—nay, rather, every time that He renews His sacrifice in the holy mass, He renews the complete surrender He has made of Himself. What constancy! What continuance of most noble love! Now turn again your thoughts to the sacrifices you have so often made to Jesus Christ. Alas! of the greatest part of them, there does not, perhaps, remain a vestige in your heart. Do you recollect those burning resolves of a recollected, observant, patient life?—those sacrifices of your affections, of your dislikes, of your regards, your human respects—those good beginnings of study, of diligence, of exactness in prayer and spiritual things—where are they now? Who has snatched them from you? Ah! faithless and inconstant heart, be witness against yourself in the bitterness of your confusion and your

sorrow. But this confusion and this sorrow, shall they be once more useless? Reflect how infinite would have been the loss for mankind if Jesus Christ, as His foolish and impious enemies instigated him to do, had come down from the cross! If that loving Heart had closed that sacred wound, which is so precious a fountain of sweetness, of courage, and of love for souls, what a beloved object and incitement would have been taken away from the hopes of weak and timid souls!

2. Draw near, then, to this adorable fountain of life in a transport of extreme, but holy, despair. If thou dost not help me, omnipotent Heart of my Jesus, so often deluded by me, I have no other resource in my misery. Here excite your grief as much as is in your power, and at the same time, as if you would fan the flame, rouse and provoke your desire to be now and henceforth true and faithful; and cry aloud from the bottom of your desolate heart, that this time you must not be refused the grace of persevering constancy in your good purposes. Know that nothing can give greater pleasure to this divine Heart than the sight of your longing desire. Let this reflection revive your confidence. If you know how to desire earnestly enough, you will certainly obtain your wish. Call to the aid of your prayers the most sweet Mother

of this most sweet Heart, and conclude the meditation with an offering which may embrace and renew all those which you have hitherto made.

VIGIL.

PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

Since the end for which Jesus Christ Himself taught this devotion to His sacred Heart, was to inflame the hearts of all the faithful with love for Him, and to engage all who love Him to repair by the most perfect love they are capable of, and by their tender and reverent worship, the wrongs which He so especially receives in His most holy Sacrament, from the coldness and faults of those souls which persevere in ingratitude towards Him—in accordance with this end the same intention must animate all you do in honor of the sacred Heart on this feast.

On the evening of the Vigil, if you are able and can obtain permission, spend some reasonable time—half-an-hour, perhaps—certainly not more, that it may not interfere with public duties, and with the morning rising—before Jesus in the Sacrament. In this visit dispose your heart to the sentiments which ought to animate your devotion on the feast with the following meditation.

ELEVENTH MEDITATION.

THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

In order that you may attain to the best knowledge you can of this most holy Heart, consider in it,—i. first, the divinity to which it is united ;—ii. secondly, the love of which it has been and is, the seat,—iii. thirdly, the grief of which it was once the centre.

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Imagine that you see in the Blessed Sacrament Jesus Christ as He revealed Himself to the Venerable Mother, M. Alacoque, showing her His divine Heart, wounded and wholly surrounded with flames, encircled by a crown of thorns, and with a cross planted upon it.

Second Prelude.—Beg of your Sovereign and your divine Spouse to give you a special light to know the incomprehensible value of this His Heart, and to dispose you to honor it with the sentiments of veneration and of love which he expects from you.

POINT I.

The divinity to which the sacred Heart of Jesus Christ is united.

1. In the Incarnation the divine nature united itself personally, not only to the soul, but also to the adorable body of Jesus Christ, so that in this personal union His Heart also became one with the divinity of the Eternal Word of the Father; and was therefore and will be eternally, a divine Heart, and the Heart of God. God, therefore, is the principle of the subsistence of this Heart; and the life which this Heart lives is not merely human, but also divine. To the divinity, therefore, as to the final term, are referred all the supreme honors which we pay to it, and which all the faithful ought to pay it. Observe the religious worship and solemn adorations even, which the Church pays and commands to be paid to the adorable body of the Man-God. The same exactly His adorable Heart merits, and for the same reason. When, therefore, you prostrate yourself, Religious soul, before a holy picture of this Heart of your spouse, understand to how exalted an object you offer your homage, and take care to animate it with feelings of that most profound veneration which is due to the divinity of so noble a spouse

2. But oh! from this intimate union with the divine nature, how many, how great treasures enrich the Heart of the Man-God! These

treasures of grace, and of sanctity cannot be greater, because they are divine. O Heart pure with the very purity of God—Heart holy with the very holiness of God—Heart charitable with the very charity of God—Heart strong with the very strength of God! O Heart, sweet, liberal, faithful, generous with the very sweetness, liberality, fidelity, and generosity of God! O Heart adorable, then, and amiable, as God Himself is adorable and amiable! To-day, perhaps for the first time, I begin to conceive what Thou art! Ah! my Sovereign and my spouse, make my heart a worthy offering to Thine! Yes, Religious soul, this is what God Himself expects. The Heart of your Spouse is made so noble, so pure, so holy, so faithful, so courageous, in order that it may be a perfect model for your wretched heart.

3. Compare, then, attentively, the Heart of Jesus Christ with your own in these divine gifts. O God! what an infinite difference! Observe where this difference is greatest, and what the cause may be. Every human heart has its weakness, and it is in this precisely that you must especially propose to yourself the example of this most holy Heart. What is there wanting in Thee, O divine Heart, of the qualities of which I stand most in need? O living Temple of the Divinity,

my heart is in darkness, and in Thee the fullness of wisdom inhabits corporally—my heart is weak, Thine is the throne of omnipotence—my heart is fearful and afflicted, oppressed, and craving after happiness, but despairing to find it; in Thee alone, and in imitating Thee, is my true happiness to be sought, and in Thee for the future I will seek it.

POINT II.

The love of which the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ has been, and is, the seat.

1. The heart, which is so active a member in us, is still more so in Jesus Christ. For in Him that Heart was, and is, the seat of His love, not only for His divine Father, but oh, how much more wonderful, for us also!

Enter, O cold Religious soul, on this consideration with an ardent desire of understanding well the secret history of love in this divine Heart. For love and life had there the same beginning, and for you that divine Heart learned at once those emotions which form the occupation and the labor of a heart that loves. Go in thought to the crib, and there enter the Heart of that infant God, that little Heart whose new-born love is already so great, that truly it may be

said of the divine Infant. "He exulted as a giant in the beginning of His course:" and His course is the course of love. And oh! in all His life, what resistless, what laborious yet unwearied strides! Mark the emotions, the pains of the heart of one of us, when a prey to the violence of love. Remove from this most lively passion that which partakes of moral imperfection in us, and all that remains, the Heart of your divine Spouse has really and sensibly experienced for you. We call love a fire, because it kindles in the heart a flame that can be felt; a flame so devouring, where love is great, that Saints have needed cold winds and freezing water to temper its heat. And in such a state the Heart of Jesus lived for you during so many years. Oh, how quick is the heart's correspondence with the emotions of a soul that loves! What throbbings and impetuous sallies does a great desire not cause in the heart? Distance dries up the very life of the heart in which it burns: ingratitude pierces and wounds it as would a sword: compassion wrings and straitens it; loss will make it languish and die.

2. And you—ever present to the mind of your most loving Redeemer, with all the various and melancholy vicissitudes of your life foreseen—you have made this incredibly lov-

ing Heart of His pass in its affection for through all these anxieties. Oh! may you, one day at least be as holy as He desires! Oh! that I could show you the pain, not grievous indeed, but sweet, which its love for you gave to that most amiable heart—how it swelled, and throbbed, and burned with sweet yet ardent transports of joy in its affections for you! It is true that Heart, in the midst of this sensibility, is infinitely, imperturbably happy; but for the pure, the faithful, the affectionate soul, that sensibility is glorified, not lost. You may yet be an object of those divine emotions of pleasure, of that divine fire, which even in its glory still inflames the Heart of Jesus. And now what think you of this idea, though so feeble, of the effects of the love which glows for you in that divine Heart? And does not this give the exact history of the merits of this Heart towards you, and yet unacknowledged by you? And what does so pleasing and so amiable a devotion require at your hands? Draw from these considerations sentiments of admiration, praise, and thanksgiving: but above all inflame your desires, and resolve that henceforth the love of this Heart shall be the continual business of your heart.

POINT III.

The grief which once centered in the holy Heart of Jesus Christ.

1. "No," said the devout Thomas à Kempis, "there is no life of love without pain:" and thus the life of Jesus' Heart especially was nothing but cross and martyrdom. Consider only its share in the Passion. Recall, O Religious soul, the horror and the pity which you have sometimes felt when meditating on the impious and cruel outrages offered to the adorable body of Jesus Christ, and know that all these together were the least of His pains. The most terrible was the unseen martyrdom of the Heart. It first was assailed in the garden; it was at last broken and crushed when He breathed forth His soul on the cross. In us, too, the heart is the seat, not of love alone, but of grief, so that no evil really pains us, but when and inasmuch as the heart admits it; but oh! never hope to understand the share which the Heart of Jesus bore in His Passion. You have heard of its fear, its weariness, its sadness at the apprehension of the tortures it was to suffer, at its abandonment and loss of every comfort, and from its hatred of sin and the ingratitude of man. But reflect that all these woes exteriorly came in

succession one after another; but the Heart felt them all at once. Reflect that if the physical nature of the body of Christ was exquisitely sensible, much more sensible was the moral organization of His Heart; and thus that every torment touched the affections of His Heart more than it did any part of His body: that, in fine, the eagerness of His executioners to strike was but the eagerness of human malice; but that in the Passion of His Heart a far more eager executioner—His own chosen and most barbarous executioner—was His own unchanging love.

2. Who, then, can imagine the languor,—the heaviness,—the fainting,—the heart-renderings,—the anguish,—the spasms,—the burning fever,—the death-like chill? Oh! where are these words to express even what we comprehend, and how very little do we comprehend in comparison of that which we believe! Jesus Christ Himself would give us a visible proof of the invisible martyrdom of His Heart, but nothing less sufficed than the portentous miracle of a bloody sweat. O loving Heart, O Suffering Heart of my Jesus, what do I owe Thee? If I owe love for love, truly I owe Thee pain for pain. But how can I, so weak, so tender towards myself, offer Thee such a return, unless Thou give me a share of Thy courage? Give me,

O Jesus! give me love, a great love; for love will teach me to suffer, will help me to suffer, will make it dear to me to suffer in union with Thy most holy Heart.

FOR THE DAY OF THE FEAST.

As this is the Feast of the Heart of Jesus Christ, it is also the Feast of His love; and the end for which He wished it should be instituted was that He might draw from our cold hearts a return and compensation for His love. And that He may obtain this end more easily, He presents His sacred Heart to us as the object of our feast, as it is really in itself, and as it is the symbol of His divine charity. To the worship, then, and adoration of this Heart, infinitely worthy of our adoration and our homage, you should especially consecrate this day in the spirit of this devotion, and that spirit is to excite your love to a correspondence with the love of the Son of God for you, and for all men, and to make some reparation and amends to a God so loving and so little loved, for your ingratitude and that of all mankind.

Hasten, then, to consecrate the first moment of your day by an offering of your heart, and of all the good you may do, to the most amiable Heart of your divine Spouse

for the end already spoken of, and continually renew this oblation throughout the day. All the day should be a perpetual act of love, of sympathy, and honor to Jesus Christ. Be as silent and as recollected as you can, and animate even your external actions with the same intentions. Entertain yourself with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, as assiduously as your duties and your strength will permit. Offer your holy communion in reparation for the coldness, the unworthiness of your former communions, and of those of all Christians; and make your preparation the most diligent, and your thanksgiving the most affectionate, that you ever offered.

But, for the love of Jesus Christ, do not run to-day in the too common error of so many souls, which grow weary of making acts of virtue, because they do not experience sensible peace and devotion. If you take too much notice of this, you will perhaps do nothing to-day. Labor therefore with an open heart, and a good will, and omit nothing which you would do if you were in a state of devotion.

TWELFTH MEDITATION.

ON THE LOVE OF THE SACRED HEART, AND ITS GRATITUDE.

(*For the Feast of the Sacred Heart.*)

Preparatory prayer.—As usual.

First Prelude.—Imagine that you see Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, as the Venerable Mother M. Alacoque saw Him, showing her His Heart, wounded, surrounded by flames, encircled with thorns, and surmounted by a cross; and explaining the mystical meaning of these symbols, which signify His love and His sufferings for ungrateful man.

Second Prelude.—Beseech Him to make you know and feel how equally incomprehensible are these two excesses of so great a love in Himself, and such great ingratitude in us; that thus you may resolve to make satisfaction to the best of your power to this Heart so loving and so little loved.

POINT I.

1. What are the continual sentiments of the Divine Heart towards man in this Sacrament? They are sentiments of the most lively and most sincere love.

i. What the mid-day is to the sun, such is the Blessed Sacrament to the love of Jesus Christ for us—the culminating point of its light and heat. What is Jesus Christ doing in the Blessed Sacrament? He is loving us. Behold an answer which says everything, and satisfies all that can be asked about Him! Why does He come to you? Because He loves you. How does he remain with you? As a God who loves. What does He desire for you? That which love desires. Why does He so multiply Himself? Why is He so enduring with you? Why does He thus hide Himself? Because He loves, because He loves. On the cross love shared its empire with, or rather was subservient to, justice. Here love reigns alone, and all is subservient to it. Wisdom, power, providence, immensity, employ themselves to this end, that love may have its final satisfaction. Blind man, see what the Heart of your God is for you.

ii. And do you not experience this every day?—Sinful souls, how does He receive you here? His complaints, His lamentations, His reproaches, His very terrors, are but emotions of love. Tepid and imperfect souls, has He ever driven you from Him? Does He not, on the contrary, offer you light, and medicine, and comfort, and en-

couragement?—But you, O pure and fervent souls, ah! it is yours to testify to the world what this divine Heart is in the Blessed Sacrament! What condescension! What forgetfulness of its own greatness! What artifices! What interior speeches! What caresses! What torrents of delights!

2. Linger here, O Religious soul, and apply all these reflections to yourself. Take up the place which once perhaps belonged to you, and then that which now belongs to you, whether among sinners, or the imperfect, or the fervent. The affections which you should call forth are those especially of admiration, praise, and thanksgiving. Ah! perhaps in all your life you have never returned express thanks to this divine Heart for this excess of love.

POINT II.

1. What are the feelings of most men towards Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar?

i. See how many do not even know that there is a God who has reduced Himself to this state for love of them, and Jesus Christ meanwhile is actually employed in loving all in His Sacrament. And of these blind ones some wilfully close their eyes, though in-

vited to become acquainted with their Lord, and to consider Him.

ii. And is not this, O Jesus, the most monstrous contempt of all Thy love? Ah! no—this is not the worst of the cruel treatments which the greater part of Christians offer to the loving Heart of their God in this Sacrament. Full well do they know, ungrateful creatures, and profess to believe, His immense love in the Blessed Sacrament. But how do they correspond?

2. Ah! Religious soul, now review in thought the infidelities, the irreverences, the dishonor, the sacrileges, the insults which Jesus Christ suffers from Christians in this Sacrament. Consider the circumstances of time, manner, number, persons which aggravate these wrongs. Excite yourself to a great, a holy indignation, at the sight of such outrages, and then reflect upon your own behavior. What, have you, too, ill-treated your divine Lover! Run over your past life. Good God! And perhaps your ingratitude has gone on increasing with your years! O terrible thought, if the purity, the devotion, the fervor of your first communions have been continually relaxing! At such a sight, O throw yourself in spirit at the foot of this throne of love, burying yourself in confusion. Beg light to recognize

and detest yourself, and plenteous grace to form suitable resolutions.

POINT III.

1. What are the feelings of this divine Heart with regard to the unworthy return made to it by men?

i. That we may come to understand them, let us first consider what they justly might be. How did this same God treat the Hebrew nation, when ungrateful for the favor of His abode with them in the ancient Temple? He repudiated the Temple, razed it to its very foundations, and protested that He departed from their nation for ever. Surely the Christian, so much more highly favored, would deserve no less; but God's love is far greater than our offences. What patience, what charity, what invincible sweetness! Here Jesus is still the meek Lamb, dumb beneath the knife that slays it.

ii. True, He has sometimes given vent to lois feelings in secret with souls which He Hved; but His complaints are but stronger proofs of His love. Hear how he spoke to the Venerable Mother M. Alacoque, of the forgetfulness of men:—"This is a greater torment to me than any which I suffered in my passion. If men did but render me love for love, I should count as nothing all that I

have yet done for them, and would willingly do even more if it were possible; but the desire I have to benefit them meets with no return but coldness and repulse!" What feeling do these tender complaints of the Son of God excite in you? "But that which most afflicts me," He said to her on another occasion, "is, that I should be treated so by hearts consecrated to me."

2. Ah! here Jesus Christ speaks of you, Religious soul, cold, unfaithful, insensible to the outrages offered to Him. To preserve always in yourself a tender gratitude for such great love, a lively sorrow for such ingratitude, an efficacious desire to make reparation by service and love on your part,—these are the affections which you should excite. These three affections form the distinguishing character of a heart devoted to the adorable Heart of Jesus. Resolve, offer, beg grace, and thus dispose yourself to make a gift, an entire sacrifice of yourself.

The thanksgiving after your holy Communion should be finished with the act of consecration, or an offering of your heart to the love of Jesus Christ; in which, remember you are to have no intention of a vow; and then let the act of atonement or reparation follow, for your own ingratitude, as well as that of all mankind.

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

Adorable Heart of my most amiable Jesus, seat of all virtues, inexhaustible source of all graces, what fitness canst Thou ever have found in me, to win Thee to such an extent that Thou shouldst love me with this excess of love; while my heart, defiled as it is with countless faults, has reserved nothing for Thee but indifference and hardness? The most generous remonstrances made to me by Thy love, then, even while I loved Thee not, make me hope that Thou wilt graciously accept this offer of my love. Vouchsafe, then, most amiable Saviour, to accept the desire which I have of consecrating myself entirely to the honor and glory of Thy most sacred Heart; accept the donation which I make of all that I am. To Thee I consecrate my person, my life, my actions, pains, and sufferings. My wish is to be in future a victim consecrated to Thy glory, soon to be set on fire by Thy love, and one day, according to Thy good pleasure, to be entirely consumed by its holy flames. I offer Thee, then, my Lord and my God, my heart, with all the sentiments it can ever have, since I purpose that, throughout my whole life, the sentiments of my heart shall be perfectly uniform with the sentiments of Thy most

sacred Heart. Behold me, therefore, O Lord, wholly devoted to Thy Heart, behold me wholly Thine. Ah, my good God! how great are Thy mercies towards me! My God, God of Majesty, and who am I that Thou shouldst deign to accept the sacrifice of my heart? It shall be wholly Thine in future, this heart of mine, and creatures shall have no part in it, since they deserve none.

Be Thou, for the future, amiable Jesus, my Father, my Patron, my All, since I wish to live no longer but for Thee. Accept, O adorable Saviour of mankind, the sacrifice which the most ungrateful of men makes to Thy Heart, to repair the wrongs which he has not ceased hitherto to offer to it, by corresponding so ill with its love. I acknowledge that I give little; but I give at least all that I can to Thy sacred Heart, and I know that it is my heart which it desires; and when I consecrate to it this heart of mine, I give it never more to take it back.

Teach me, most amiable Saviour, a perfect forgetfulness of myself, this being the only road which can give me the entrance, which I so earnestly desire, into Thy adorable Heart; and as from henceforth I shall do all for Thee, make what I shall do worthy of Thee. Teach me what I ought to do to arrive at the purity of Thy love; or rather

give me this love, yes, give it to me most ardent and most generous. Give me that profound humility without which no one can be pleasing to Thee, and accomplish in me all Thy holy wishes as well in time as for all eternity. Amen.

AN ACT OF REPARATION IN HONOR OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

My most amiable and most adorable Jesus, ever full of love for us, ever moved by our miseries, ever most desirous to share Thy treasures with us, and to give Thyself wholly to us; Jesus, my Saviour and my God, who, by an excess of the most ardent and wonderful love that ever was, wouldst make Thyself a victim in the adorable Eucharist, in which a million times a day Thou offerest Thyself in sacrifice for us, what must be Thy sentiments in this state, when in return for all this Thou findest in the hearts of the greater part of men nothing but hardness, forgetfulness, ingratitude, and contempt?

Was it not enough, my Saviour, to have trod for our salvation that path so full of suffering for Thyself, when Thou mightest have given us proof of Thy excessive love at so much less a cost? Was it not enough to have once abandoned Thyself to that cruel agony and deadly weight of sorrow, oc-

casioned by the horrid picture of our sins which Thou took upon thyself? Why expose Thyself every day to all the indignities of which the blackest malice of men and fiends is capable? Ah! my God and my most amiable Redeemer, what were the sentiments of Thy most holy Heart at the sight of such ingratitude, and of all our sins? What, alas! was the bitterness in which Thy heart was plunged at such outrages and such sacrileges?

Moved, therefore, to bitter sorrow for all these indignities, behold me prostrate and annihilated in Thy presence, humbly offering Thee this reparation of honor before the face of heaven and earth, for the irreverences and outrages suffered by Thee upon our altars since the first institution of this adorable Sacrament. With a heart humbled and pierced with grief, I ask pardon of Thee a thousand, thousand times, for all these base wrongs. O my God, why can I not wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those places where Thy sacred Heart has been so fearfully despised, where the most precious pledges of Thy divine love have been received with such strange contempt? Why is it not allowed me to repair such sacrileges and such profanations by some new homage, humiliation, and self-annihilation? Why might I

not be, for one moment only, master of the hearts of all men, to recompense in some manner, with the sacrifice I would make to Thee, the forgetfulness and insensibility of all those who would not know Thee, or, knowing Thee, have loved Thee so little?

But, O adorable Saviour, that which covers me with confusion, and which ought to make me lament most, is that I have been myself one of these ungrateful creatures. You, O my God, who behold the very depths of this heart of mine, behold also the grief which I feel for my ingratitude, and at seeing Thee treated with such indignity! Behold the disposition in which I am to do and suffer all to repair it! See me, then, O Lord, with my heart broken with grief, humbled, beaten to the ground, and ready to receive at Thy hands all that thou shalt be pleased to exact in reparation for such outrages. Strike, Lord, strike! I shall bless, I shall kiss, a hundred times the hand which inflicts so just a chastisement. Why am I not worthy to be the victim to repair such wrongs? Why can I not bathe with my blood those places where Thy most sacred body has been dragged along and trampled under foot? Oh! how happy should I be if, by all imaginable torments, I could make reparation for such outrages, such contempt, such impi-

eties! I do not merit so great a grace, but accept at least my desire. Accept, eternal Father, this reparation of honor in union with that which the most sacred Heart made to Thee upon Calvary, and that which the Virgin Mother made at the foot of the cross of her son! And in conformity with the prayer which that divine Heart offered to Thee, pardon me these wrongs and irreverences which I have committed, and by Thy grace give effect to my will, and to the resolution which I make to love Thee with all fervor, and to honor Thee in all possible ways, my Sovereign, my Saviour, and my Judge, since I believe that Thou art really present in the adorable Eucharist; and for the future I will show, also, by the respect with which I will stand before it, and by the frequency of my visits to adore it, that I believe Thee to be really present. And as I make profession of giving especial honor to Thy sacred Heart, I will choose it as my sojourn during the rest of my life. Grant me the grace which I ask of Thee, that at the moment of my death I may breathe forth my last sigh in this same most sacred Heart. Amen.

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